ST/ESA/SER.B/6

REPORT

OF THE REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR AFRICA ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO POPULATION FACTORS

(Organized by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa)

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INTRODUCTION

A. Organization of the Seminar

1. The Regional Seminar for Africa on the Integration of Women in Development, with Special Reference to Population Factors, was held at Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 3 June to 7 June 1974, under the sponsorship of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities.

B. Objectives

2. The Seminar was convened in response to General Assembly resolution 3345 (XXIX) concerning the Second United Nations Development Decade, which, among its major objectives, calls for the encouragement of the full integration of women in the total development effort. It also responded to the stated aims and principles of World Population Year, 1974, which anticipated projects which would focus attention on the participation of women in development programmes, with special reference to population matters. The Seminar was also in keeping with the work programme of the Human Resources Division of ECA, whose continuing priorities, in connexion with the long-term programme for the advancement of women, include popular participation in development, with special emphasis on the role of women.

3. Several conferences held in Africa[1/], sponsored variously by the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations advisory services in the field of human rights, the All-Africa Women's Conference, voluntary agencies, and bilateral agreements, have stressed the importance of bringing about greater integration of women in the development of their countries. These meetings have examined factors, including the spacing of childbirth, which influence women's effective contribution to social, economic, political, civic and cultural life. Reports from these meetings have enumerated specific steps towards the integration of women in development, including establishment of national commissions on women and

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1/ Dar es Salaam, 1962; Lagos, 1963; Lomé, 1964; Accra, 1968; Addis Ababa, 1969; Rabat, Libreville and Brazzaville, 1971; Dar es Salaam, 1972.

development and technical women's bureaux. The activities of the present Seminar greatly expanded upon the work done previously.

4. The aim of the Seminar was to contribute to understanding the relevance, [illegible] extent to which women are integrated in the development process. Participants were invited to formulate proposals for action which would be offered for consideration by Member States in the Africa Region, by the ECA Conference of Ministers, by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and by other concerned agencies of the world community.

C. Membership and attendance

5. The following States members of ECA were represented at the Seminar: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Dahomey, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire. France, Spain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and the United States of America were represented by observers.

6. Representatives attended from the following United Nations bodies: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA); also from these specialized agencies: International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Health Organization (WHO).

7. The non-governmental organizations represented were: Bahá'í International Community, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (of the World Council of Churches), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), OXFAM, World Education, Inc., World Young Women's Christian Association and Zonta International.

D. Opening of the Seminar

8. The Executive Secretary of ECA opened the Seminar by calling on the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to read a message from the United Nations Secretary-General.

9. The Secretary-General found it fitting that, in World Population Year, 1974, and as a prelude to the activities to take place in International Women's Year, 1975, we should think positively about how the position of women -- who represent 51 per cent of the world's population -- could be improved, and how their talents could be better utilized for the benefit of all. He reminded the participants that it was the women who formed the bulk of the poorest, the illiterate, the unskilled, and the unemployed.

He noted that the world was today facing accelerating changes and an entirely new range of interlocking political, economic and social problems, and that women had a most important role to play in the search for solutions of those problems if a more balanced and humane social and economic world order was to be achieved.

10. The Secretary-General noted that the Seminar focused attention upon the interrelationships between the situation of women, development and population, and that it offered an opportunity for furthering Africa's strategy for development in the 1970's. That strategy called for the enhancement and utilization of human resources to be an integral part of over-all economic and social policies, priorities, and programmes, particularly in relation to population, development and income distribution. He urged that, as the Seminar achieved the objective of increasing social awareness of the issues with which it dealt, it should also point the way to innovative action, through practical and concrete short-term and long-term programmes.

11. The Executive Secretary of ECA, on behalf of the Commission, then welcomed participants to Africa Hall and to the Regional Seminar for Africa on the Integration of Women in Development. He expressed particular gratitude to the Assistant Secretary-General, Mrs. Helvi Sipila, for confirming once again, by her presence, her interest in the ECA programme for the integration of women in national development. The Seminar, he said, had been organized to serve a dual purpose: as part of the World Population Year, and in anticipation of the International Women's Year.

12. He asserted the importance of the purposes of the Seminar to the work programme of the Commission and to the development efforts of African Governments. For some years now, ECA had been concerned to create an awareness of the need to increase skills and employment opportunities for African women and girls. African households were changing somewhat, making it possible for some women to obtain skills and to participate in remunerative activities. Now the task was to explore the economic scene in order to enable women and girls to identify, evaluate, and accept opportunities for premarital employment and part-time and career activities.

13. The main areas touched upon by the Executive Secretary were demographic factors related to improving the quality of life in Africa, and conditions of labour related to improving the role of women in economic development. Among demographic factors, he discussed the relation of family planning to improvements in the health of mothers and that of their children, and to the levels of economic resources and nutrition prevailing within families. Unfortunately the frequency of births and miscarriages, coupled with malnutrition and the drudgery of daily life, depleted the energies of mothers. Also, the size of the family often drained available and lowered the standards of nutrition and comfort which each member of the household might hope to enjoy. At the community level, the age composition of the population could be as important as family size as an influence upon well-being: where much of the population was under age 15,

the burden of dependent youth could adversely affect the level of per capita income.

14. With regard to the conditions of labour, the Executive Secretary stated that discussion of the role of women in economic development must, of necessity, examine the conditions of recruitment and employment for both men and women. The International Labour Office had already drawn up a large number of international conventions governing the conditions of employment of women. Therefore, as a follow-up to the Seminar, discussion groups in African countries might be organized to see whether conventions had been ratified and to examine the extent to which machinery for their enforcement was effective. Attention should also be given to the economic importance of women's work within the family setting. While men considered themselves to be at the helm of progress, much depended upon the agricultural, commercial, and domestic activities of women. Rather than continuing to take such support for granted, improvements should be made to enhance those contributions. Due consideration to the wife should also be given by employers when transferring personnel. In this way, both man and wife could find opportunities to exercise their talents if they moved from one area to another and the wife's skill might contribute to the improvement of the local community.

15. In sum, the Executive Secretary urged that greater recognition be given the role which women and girls could play in socio-economic development, and that the many aspects of development include integration of women and serve to increase their competence as essential parts of the entire process. To help achieve this, he hoped that the Seminar would produce recommendations which could be submitted through the Conference of Ministers to guide the actions of Governments.

16. The next address was delivered by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Assistant Secretary-General expressed the hope that a pragmatic Plan of Action would emerge from the Seminar as a guide for Governments and for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in their policies and plans for the full integration of women in the development effort. Women, she said, were largely the forgotten factor in development efforts and often even in population policies. She referred to the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, the Programme of Concerted International Action for the Advancement of Women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which had all been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and to various international conventions and regretted that most of these

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2/ General Assembly resolutions 2626 (XXV), 2716 (XXV) and 2263 (XXII).

recommendations and strategies concerning women had received little attention to date. Integrating women into development efforts had been given low priority and had been regarded as an isolated issue rather than as an integral, and crucial part of the process of increasing the economic and social well-being of all persons.

17. Low levels of participation by women in development were explained by the Assistant Secretary-General as deriving from many factors and invalid assumptions about women's roles which had led to discriminatory practices. The traditional idea was that females devoted their life-time to being homemakers, mothers, and dependent upon men; many women, however, were the prime support of their families. Again, cultural patterns, divorce and widowhood, or long-term labor migration by men might make remunerative activities necessary. Since females had not been expected to be breadwinners, they lacked access to education and training; thus lack of employment and other opportunities were a natural consequence. Where women had not been able to obtain full participation in the life of society, not only the women but the community at large suffered. Unable to contribute to development, women might retard its pace; even activity solely in the domestic setting might be impeded by lack of skills and tools necessary for more effective efforts. The full participation of women in the total development effort was, however, a prerequisite for the implementation of the concept of the unified approach to economic and social development, which needed the participation of all human resources and which demanded that everyone should benefit from it.

18. The full integration of women in the life of society, could not however, be achieved by women themselves. It needed various measures which only Governments and other authorities could take, supported by the action of society as a whole. But above all it needed political will and commitment to provide the necessary resources. This could most speedily be effected if more women were included in national and international planning and policy-making procedures.

19. The role of women as an important factor affecting population trends and as a crucial one for any effort to change those trends had largely been ignored. The results of recent studies which had, however, established relationships between development, population and the status of women had begun to change the attitudes and priorities given by Governments to the integration of women in the development effort at all levels and its relationship to population factors. It appeared that a better education, a more independent economic status, equality of men and women under civil law, and women's general opportunity for roles alternative to the traditional one of mother and homemaker, all tended to give women greater capacity to have children according to choice rather than by chance. Moreover, the quality of the population should be improved through the greater protection of mothers and infants which was afforded by influences upon general health and nutrition, the mother's age at childbirth, the interval between pregnancies, completed family size, the position of women in family

and society, the working life of mothers, the availability of maternity leave, and access to medical and other services related to maternity, child care and social security. Whatever the population policy of a Government, the Assistant Secretary-General was confident that it would encourage not only the quantity of population, but also its quality, especially the newborn.

20. The Assistant Secretary-General explained that the Regional Seminar for Africa had followed a similar meeting in Asia and the Far East, and was to be followed by Seminars in Latin America and Western Asia. She commended the Economic Commission for Africa for having established a long-term programme for the advancement of women, which was supported not only by the Commission itself, but also by the United Nations specialized agencies, various donor countries, and non-governmental organizations. She thanked the Executive Secretary of ECA, for his foresight in establishing the women's programme, and for his co-operation in organizing the Seminar, the United Nations Funds for Population Activities for its financial contributions, and the participants who had come in order to contribute to the attainment of the purposes of the Seminar.

21. The following officers were unanimously elected at the first meeting:

Helène Haddad (Ivory Coast)	President
Negiba Abdel Hamid (Egypt)	Vice-President
Marcelle Abeng (Gabon)	Vice-President
Priscilla Mdziniso (Swaziland)	Rapporteur

E. Agenda

22. The agenda for the Seminar was as follows:

1. Opening addresses
2. Election of officers
3. The data base for discussion on the interrelation between the integration of women in development, their situation and population factors in Africa
4. Policies and programmes affecting the integration of women in development, their situation and population factors
5. Proposals for action and priorities.

F. Adoption of the report

23. At the closing session on 7 June 1974, the Seminar uranimously adopted the report and the recommendations contained therein. The Plan of Action approved by the Seminar appears as a separate document (ST/ESA/SER.B/6/Add.1). It is, however, integral in substance to this final report; the topics dealth with there are commented upon more fully here.

I. INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SITUATION OF WOMEN, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION FACTORS

A. Introduction

24. In keeping with the theme of promoting the integration of women in development, participants at the Seminar discussed both current conditions and needed changes related to the situation of women, national development and population factors. They recognized that African women have traditionally been active in the domestic setting and in the subsistence economy, but that women's access to the activities and benefits of the modern sectors has been much less than that for men. Insufficient attention to women has meant retardation of their advancement, has had an unfavorable impact upon demographic factors, and has impeded the pace of development in general. The "Data base" paper (E/CN.14/SW/37), which was prepared for the Seminar, helped clarify the nature of the situation and focus the discussion on critical aspects of it. The Plan of Action (see para. 23 above) drawn up by the Seminar, indicated the consensus on guidelines for policy change. These two documents appear separately from the present report but should be read in conjunction with it.

B. Current situation of women

25. It was agreed that the current situation of women in the Africa Region was still very largely identified with the conditions of subsistence and the early stages of modernization. Despite notable advances in some sectors, leading to improved health, employment, education, housing, and other indicators of an elevation in the standards of living, most persons, male and female, might be characterized as illiterate, rural, agriculturally-employed, poor, and with relatively little access to public authorities or public services. Moreover, the advances being made in development of the physical and human resources of the Region tended to involve males more often than females; males took advantage of the opportunities and benefits of modernization, while, for various reasons, females remained more attached to traditional modes of life. This disparity between the sexes was unfortunate, not only from the egalitarian point of view, but because the perpetuation of the situation led to a wastage of human potential and impeded the process of development itself.

26. The cycle of poverty, influenced in part by rapid rates of population growth, was recognized to be a basic problem for development. It was also made clear that the lack of access by women to the tools of development, and to its rewards, had significant consequences. For example, data on the situation of women in Africa indicated that they played a very important role in the production, processing, and distribution of food through their activities in agriculture, domestic duties and petty trading. However, their traditional labours tended to be inefficient and their significance was often overlooked; in addition, they carried a full-time

workload at low levels of technology which netted them only a marginally productive return for their efforts. Where the magnitude of their contributions was not fully acknowledged, little assistance was extended to upgrade the level of their productivity, and their potential to contribute to the transformation of the rural environment or, for example, improve the nutrition of the family received little recognition. Despite some mention of official concern for rapid increase in fertility (or sometimes for declining fertility), the role of women might not be acknowledged in relation to population problems. Where efforts to deal with those problems failed to concentrate on alleviating the conditions of burdensome work, poor living standards, malnutrition and disease, one found high rates of fertility accompanied by high rates of mortality, including considerable pregnancy wastage and infant mortality. Again, despite women's role as mothers of future generations, and providers of their nurture, women were only peripherally involved in the planning and decision-making for their countries. As a consequence of over-work, frequent child-bearing, low status, low priority in obtaining good food, early ageing, and lack of access to knowledge and resources, women might be said to retard the pace of development.

27. Impediments to the integration of women in development derived from many sources; these were discussed at length at the Seminar. The traditional status of women had been identified with the roles of wife, mother, and guardian of the cultural heritage. In those capacities women had served to perpetuate the family and society. Under the traditional subsistence conditions of early marriage, family farming, inadequate equipment, and little control over disease and death, the life of a female was oriented very largely towards her capacities to reproduce and to provide sustenance for her family. Before the age of 20 the female carried a full load of adult responsibilities; by age 25 she might have given birth half a dozen times; by age 40 she might already be exhausted by illness, poor nutrition, childbearing and heavy work in the fields and at home; she died early. To the males went the responsibilities for decision-making, for protecting the household, and for providing the family with material benefits. In the traditional setting, everyone, child and adult, was engaged in making a living through a system of tasks which was differentiated by age and sex. A division of activities between the sexes was understandable, but, as advancements were made in the modernization process, the traditional ways often became handicaps and discriminatory against females. Some aspects of the disadvantaged position of females included the following: The image and self-image of women was one of economic and legal dependence upon men; such being the case, daughters were often regarded as of secondary importance to sons, and males were given preference in the acquisition of skills, remunerative employment, and even food. In the area of education, the schooling of male children might be regarded by parents as a good investment for the future, while girls more often were either kept home to help their mothers or were oriented more towards learning domestic skills. Where rural development efforts were undertaken, they might tend to favour the needs of men and neglect those of women, for

example, by enhancing the agricultural capabilities to produce cash crops while overlooking the importance of family gardens and household water supplies.

28. The Seminar recognized that overcoming the major obstacles to development in Africa required the full participation of women, for the problems facing women were not isolated but integral to the process, and the fact that females became mothers gave their condition a multiplier effect upon future generations. As examples, improvements to nutrition must involve women, for they produced and processed most of Africa's food. Health, population, and education problems could not be solved without the women who bore, nurtured, and gave initial education to children. The increase of productive employment must include expanding the employment possibilities of the female half of the population. Higher levels of production must involve improvements among the large numbers of farmers and distributors of goods who were women. More equitable distribution of income and wealth called for the greater involvement of women who were often responsible for the welfare of children and relatives.

29. The "Data base" paper presented a model for the measurement of women's integration in development, which helped to quantify the great amount of work and the small amount of access to opportunities for their betterment which characterized the present situation of women in African countries. The term of reference was the unit of participation, identified as the work or involvement of females in a given activity as a percentage of the total participation for both males and females. Estimates based on this measurement showed that women usually performed 60-80% of all agricultural work, 60-80% of all marketing or petty trading, 70% of the work on community self-help projects, and almost all household tasks (child-rearing, cooking, cleaning, fetching of fuel and water, etc.) By contrast, in those countries for which data was available, the figures showed underrepresentation of females in the acquisition of education (38% at the primary level, 29% at the secondary level), in the area of technical and professional employment (21% of which teaching and nursing formed a high proportion), and in administrative, executive, and managerial positions (about 6%). Females were thus seen to be heavily engaged in activities which were essential to the well-being of the family and to village life; however, they were less favoured than males in access to means of preparing themselves for improving the levels at which they functioned, in access to skilled types of employment, and in access to positions of responsibility and leadership which could be used to improve the levels at which women might contribute to society, the economy and polity.

30. The transition from subsistence to more modern ways of living involved freeing of individuals from the basic tasks of providing food and shelter, and from reproduction, sufficiently to enable them to engage in activities which would improve upon and diversify their livelihood,

increase wealth, decrease the burdens of survival and provide for the future. Essential components of this included education and training, economic activities beyond the traditional pursuits, improvements to health and expectation of longevity, and improved capacity to plan for and regulate major events (including the number and spacing of children). To the extent that women remained tied to the domestic setting, at drudgery levels of activity, without means for self-improvement, with only rudimentary ability to control their life processes, and with little opportunity to influence the conditions in which they lived, they could not participate in the process of personal, family, community, or national development. The integration of women in development therefore required recognizing the realities of their situation and opening up new possibilities which enhanced the position of women.

C. Issues

31. The Seminar discussed many issues which constituted particular areas of difficulty for the integration of women in development, and which deserved attention and action for their resolution. Particular attention was devoted to the situation of rural women and high priority was accorded to action to improve it. For convenience, the present report groups these issues according to the topical headings utilized in the Plan of Action: education and training; employment; communications/mass media; health, nutrition and social services; population, research, data collection and analysis; legislative and administrative measures; and organizational machinery.

1. Education and training

32. Strong emphasis was placed by the participants upon the importance of education and training as the key to the integration of women in development; the unlocking of human capabilities and of economic or other opportunities was seen to depend heavily upon the preparation of females for participation in modernization. Findings in the "Data base" paper had shown that enrolment of girls in primary school, was the area in which females were the best represented as being involved in modernization. However, in countries where as much as 85% of the total population might be illiterate, education was characteristically unavailable to the great mass of females. Advancement of females in this area was recent, chiefly a phenomenon of the past 10 or 15 years, and required much greater efforts both for equalization of conditions for males and females, and for advancement in the programmes for the two sexes. Varying degrees of progress were reported in African countries in the effort to combat the traditional under-representation of females, but the enormity of the task ahead was recognized and reiterated.

33. Since the achievement of political independence discrimination against females had been legally ended in the educational systems of most African countries, but it remained difficult for girls to gain entrance to, or continue in, school, particularly for higher education and technical

training. The drop-out rate was much higher for girls than boys, leaving only a small representation of females in classes at the upper levels. One part of the problem derived from the traditional cultural patterns regarding the needs and roles of males vs. females; families placed greater emphasis on education for boys than girls as a matter of career-preparation. Where the costs of education were difficult to meet it was argued that the investment was less usefully made in the schooling of girls, who, in any event, were expected to marry and start their own families soon. Another part of the problem lay in the subject-matter taught. Sometimes the school curricula differentiated in the course to be taken, with those for girls including an orientation towards domestic activities, while boys were more prepared in the general academic subjects and in those leading towards employment. Sex-role stereotypes were also often perpetuated within the materials being taught. Thus, since education for females did not yet lead to employment or other advantages on levels comparable with those for males, it tended to have lesser value in the eyes of students, parents and teachers.

34. Training was discussed both as vocational training and practical education for adults. It thus included traditional training efforts to develop skills directly related to economic activities, such as trades, commerce, or agricultural techniques, and non-formal education with emphasis upon literacy and short courses on such topics as nutrition, sanitation, or village co-operation. At both levels the needs of women were seen to receive insufficient attention except for the fields of nutrition and home economics where women's interests were well represented. Very little training seemed available to women in such fields as agriculture, co-operatives, or commerce, despite both the existence of government extension programmes and the efforts of some local women's self-help organizations. To remedy that situation, non-formal education and vocational training were considered to be important means of improving the present situation of women, as of redressing the inadequacies of previous services for females.

35. Participants suggested a wide variety of actions for improving the education and training of females. It was recognized that this should be a primary target in the integration of women in development, for education and training could be highly influential in changing the image and self-image of females and in encouraging them to see and to create new opportunities.

36. Priority should be given to increasing the percentage of females in both formal and non-formal educational programmes. This would require an increase of national and international effort for the establishment of educational infrastructure and attention to continuation of learning beyond the school environment, including means for self-improvement and job-related promotions. As part of this, Governments should work towards the goal of universal and free primary school education, and there should be greater efforts for adult literacy. Innovative methods were needed to overcome the disadvantage of females in these two areas. Suggestions were

made to expand programmes for numeracy and functional literacy. The general public might make use of such locations as community centres, and the major private enterprises and government agencies could themselves make arrangements for those employees in need of educational services. Segregation of boys' and girls' schools should be ended, in order to help erase differences in educational programmes and to promote the image of equality that was gained by co-education. Also provision should be made for the return to school of young mothers in order that pregnancy should not mean the end of education. Moreover, as part of International Women's Year, 1975 should be promoted as a year of intense efforts at increasing the percentage of literate persons in African countries.

37. Practical training programmes for women at the local level were another area of need. Diversified training would be essential to the build-up of women's marketable and domestic skills, to their wider choice of occupation, and to their broader participation at all levels of the job market. Included should be modern agricultural techniques, new intermediate technologies, and business and entrepreneurial skills. For the accomplishment of this, co-ordination of governmental and non-governmental (including women's organizations) efforts would be needed, taking into account the interests of those in both rural and urban areas. Training programmes should be decentralized down to a level that allowed free participation by trainees in the instruction and that might lead to workshops, co-operatives, or other modes of continuation of the acquisition and utilization of new capabilities. Volunteer work by privileged women to help their less advantaged sisters should be encouraged; also the training should be oriented towards ways in which women could improve the family's well-being and income, including the wise use of new earnings. Domestic skills should be turned towards a profit, with courses to prepare women for employment in the homes of others. The training of trainers also had importance, in order to upgrade the quality and relevance of subject-matter, and to make field agents sensitive to the complementarity of their work.

38. It was felt that school curricula needed to be re-examined with a view to offering the same courses to girls and boys, thereby attempting to eliminate sex-role stereotypes at an early age. Also, courses should be re-oriented towards greater practicality and greater correspondence with the possibilities of employment after the end of schooling. For example, children of both sexes should learn about modern forms of farming, village technology, science, trades and crafts, family decision-making, sex education and nutrition. Both sexes should be prepared and encouraged to take up activities in the modernized sectors of the economy, including agriculture and skilled occupations, in addition to the currently over-emphasized white-collar jobs. Related to and consequent on these reforms of school curricula would be revisions of the educational materials.

39. Social and vocational guidance was another area requiring efforts to expand the horizons of females. Naturally, this would include the orientation of female students towards greater opportunities in skilled employment and the professions, but at a more immediate level the guidance would include encouragement for parents to send their daughters to school, to keep them there, and to instill in them the ambition for achieving positions of responsibility. The educational system should assist in developing the idea of rights for women, and should educate females to make use of these rights.

2. Employment

40. Employment was considered to have equal priority with education as a vehicle for the integration of women in development. In terms of labour statistics, popular opinion, or development goals, work done by women were not considered to be employment, being largely farm and market activity that was family-oriented and outside the monetary system. It was agreed that female participation in the recognized sectors of employment, whether agricultural or urban, was limited, inadequate, and poorly measured. The statistics available from the ILO, from national censuses, and from other sources all seemed to under-represent the responsibilities and productive activities of women, but they highlighted the extent to which women were not integrated into the modern sectors of the economy and were thus not integrated into the development effort. Obstacles to the greater participation of women were numerous and interwoven. They included problems of obtaining or acquiring the following: requisite education or skills, freedom from family duties, a sense of capability and personal worth, access to remunerative employment, and adequate conditions of work and pay. The question of access to employment drew mixed comments from participants. Some described situations of discrimination in hiring and pay, others claimed equality of opportunity under government policy, and some even spoke of actions specifically promoting the employment of women. The level of employment was generally seen to be low, however, both in the percentage of the labour force identified as female, and in the pay grades and responsibilities held by women. The professional categories where women were most represented tended to be teaching, nurses and social work, while their participation in administration and public life showed the least advancement. Even in view of the small numbers of highly educated and experienced women, their representation in high positions was disproportionately small. A few African women had achieved outstanding success, but in general it was agreed that much more would have to be done by women and men to promote the advancement of women.

41. The discussion of employment concentrated upon the rural environment, with most attention being given to agricultural occupations, rural development and continuation of rural residence. Here, the integration of women in development would be assisted by efforts to increase productivity while reducing workloads. It was felt that agricultural

development and modernization should be given priority not only to contribute to the provision of food for a population expected to double in the next generation, but also to upgrade and expand employment opportunities for men and women alike. In many parts of Africa women were responsible for much of the heaviest agricultural tasks such as clearing the fields, digging, weeding and harvesting, usually using only the crudest implements. Since women's productivity was acknowledged to be low even with maximum inputs of time and energy, the increase of their output would have to be achieved through improvement of performance capabilities. Introduction of simple farm tools, fertilizers and better seeds, or of agricultural extension agents and radio programmes aimed at women, would be of great assistance, but there was currently not enough emphasis on improvements to ease the lot of women. The vast amount of women's farm work was often overlooked, by her family and by the development planners, leading to the exclusion of women from innovations which could reduce work and increase productivity. Consequently, the husband might plow with modern equipment while the wife continued to harvest by primitive methods. Often agrarian reforms mistakenly involved only men.

42. It was noted that because of urbanization and male migration family farms were often left to be maintained by women, dependent youth and aged persons. Women in these circumstances were trapped. They were too busy with everyday problems to advance their skills, and the emphasis on cash crops had led in many cases to harder work for them than when traditional agriculture was universal, and to poorer nutrition for their families. Because of the disproportionate allocation of resources to urban areas, the economy of rural areas tended to grow slowly, lacking in modernized employment opportunities, and in facilities for health and other social services. Water and transport as well as opportunities for education and improvement of skills, were equally lacking. In these circumstances it was difficult to promote employment, integration or development.

43. Several ways of improving the employment situation for women were proposed. It was suggested that policies favouring female employment should be enunciated at the national level, for example in development plans, in government directives to the civil service, and in programmes of assistance to women, and that encouragements for the hiring of women should be supplemented by efforts to help women become economically productive on their own account. The range of promotional activities suggested specific actions to be undertaken for employment of women under the terms of development plans, rather than merely the stating of global objectives, and included: ratification and application of international conventions regarding the conditions and benefits of employment for women; organization of programmes to introduce appropriate technology into rural communities and homes, to lighten the burden of women's domestic tasks and to improve productivity; organization of urban and rural co-operatives for female artisans, through which credit and

other aid would be available; creation of village-level workshops and training centres; assistance in the formation of women's groups as units for savings, mutual aid, and broadened cultural contact; and establishment of revolving funds which women could borrow to get started in business, and then return for use by others.

44. Ways to help women function as employees, in addition to their other major roles of home-maker and mother, were a recurrent concern for the participants. It was agreed that promotion of child-care facilities in the hands of persons other than the mother was necessary to free a portion of the mother's time for extra-familial activity, that this had precedent in the extended family system, and that children could actually benefit rather than suffer by regular contact with a community of other persons. To facilitate women's participation in development, measures to accommodate their familial role were required. These included provision of flexible working hours, day care centres, kindergarten and nursery schools, transport arrangements for working women, and promotion of cottage-industries where mothers could keep their infants nearby while working. Family planning information and services should be made available so that women could space their births and better co-ordinate their economic and motherhood roles. Moreover, in order that women might not be saddled with two days' work daily, men should be encouraged to share home labours and to lighten women's work. Improvements such as pumps and milling machines, and animal traction for water and fuel should be introduced for use at the village-wide level.

45. The interrelatedness of education and employment, already mentioned, was reiterated in the concern given to better orientation of educational programmes towards the profile of employment opportunities. Girls, in particular, had often found that they had developed abilities which could not be put to remunerative use. For both sexes education should stress the acquisition of employable skills and not just a general academic curriculum. Continuing education and vocational training -- through youth clubs, job training centres, and other vehicles -- should be promoted, giving particular attention to the needs of rural women.

46. Action was needed to improve the treatment of women in the employment market. Here emphasis should be given to motivating, encouraging, and equipping women for employment, while at the same time encouraging employers to hire women and treat them fairly in regard to conditions of work and opportunities for promotion. Attention should be given to securing equal pay for equal work and access to positions of responsibility, recognizing that the domestic roles of women might necessitate more flexible hours of work than those of male employees. As part of improved opportunities for women, there should be affirmative action for integration of women in top-level positions of representation and decision-making, such as national and regional planning bodies, especially where those had the power to influence the conditions for further advancement of women.

47. An integrated approach to rural development was also seen to be of assistance to women, for by improvements to the rural conditions at large, the environment in which most women worked could be made more productive. Improved facilities for transport, health services, water supply, and other basic elements of rural infrastructure, would all increase the output and profitability of women's endeavours. Questions related to women's employment should be considered also in the family context, and the support of men should be enlisted. Programmes for women should not be isolated from programmes for family betterment and programmes aimed at over-all development.

48. Recognition and enhancement of the major role of women in agriculture and marketing was also deemed important. Greater value should be attached to the work performed by women in subsistence and commercial farming, and in the marketing of produce and other goods. Extension and advisory services, credit, loans and other support services needed for agricultural development for crafts and small industries, and for better living generally, should be made more readily available to women. Moreover, it should be appreciated that many rural women, although illiterate, were nonetheless able and intelligent; illiteracy should not be confused with incompetence, and the potential that existed for improving the productive capabilities of women even in rude surroundings should be recognized. Traditional women's groups, such as those for harvesting, marketing, or saving, could be used as channels for programmes as could the more recently established community development clubs, for illiterate women were frequently very active in communal work. In addition, members of the more privileged strata should be encouraged to assist other women and families in their communities.

3. Communications/mass media

49. The image of women portrayed through public communications and the mass media insufficiently depicted or promoted them as full partners with men in the process of development. Since the media had a role in acquainting the public with new ideas and expanded horizons, it was important to ensure that they were used to the advantage of women. Cultural institutions such as the extended family, religious organizations, and other vehicles for traditional beliefs perpetuated certain concepts of women and their roles which were largely geared to enhancing the value of maternity and domestic support services, and to respect for the patterns of living which had proven reliable in the past. Unfortunately, these institutions also perpetuated concepts which were prejudicial to the present need for the advancement of women. It was therefore necessary to promote consciousness of the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society, to change attitudes regarding proper and desirable conduct by women, and to widen awareness of what women were doing and could further do to participate in development.

50. Action to this end should include educational campaigns to make women and men aware of women's needs and rights, to inform women of their possibilities, and to encourage them to enter more fully into the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of national life. Moreover, interest groups should be organized to promote this new approach and to stimulate changes in the presentations made by the mass media. Also important would be the stimulation of community development workers, other extension service agents, and local persons of influence who could communicate the theme of women's advancement. Specifically called for by the Plan of Action were efforts to be undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations in three areas: research on the current portrayal of women and how this could be improved; vigilance to ensure that communicated material was positive towards the participation of women in modernization and how this could be achieved; and promotion of increased professional employment of women in the field of communications and in the mass media. Effort should also be devoted to overcoming the notion that if women obtained gainful employment, this would cause men to become unemployed. Such a misconception failed to recognize elasticity in the employment market, the expansion of opportunities created by the availability of additional skilled persons, the possible areas of divergence between male and female employment, and the impact upon levels of demand for goods and services resulting from the infusion of cash from new wages, salaries and profits.

51. It was often found that women were already active in ways that fostered development in their villages, in community organizations, in various forms of employment, in political life, etc.; what was needed was recognition of this achievement, public support for it, and promotion of its emulation by many more women.

4. Health, nutrition and social services

52. Services for the improvement of health, nutrition and social conditions in countries of the Africa Region were recognized to be inadequate, and in view of the expected doubling of the Region's population by the year 2,000 and the likely increased competition for scarce resources, those inadequacies might be aggravated. It was argued that the social sectors required increased attention and a larger share of the national budget, not only as an item of consumption, but also because the maintenance of a healthy, well-fed, and secure population was important to the enhancement of productive efforts for development. The significance of the role of women within this was underscored, because in their capacity as mothers and homemakers they were responsible for much of the provision of these services at the basic level, and because mothers and infants comprised the group most vulnerable to the hazards resulting from insufficient services. Emphasis was also given to the lesser availability of services in rural areas, where most of the population resided.

53. The following characteristics were noted. Despite some improvements, health levels of women remained generally poor, infant mortality rates continued to be high, and communicable diseases were still a major cause of illness and death. Throughout the Region the health services received only a portion of what would be desirable in the annual national budgets, they suffered from a shortage of qualified personnel, and were woefully inadequate at the village level. Problems of nutrition were related to those of health, for lack of proper diet led to illness and to weakened productive capacities. Homemakers were often uninformed on the nutritive value of available foodstuffs or might have no means for conservation of perishable supplies. The scarcity of water and the impurity of obtainable water made for difficulty in raising crops, in supplying the household, and in preventing the transmission of water-borne diseases, and, further, women and children bore a great burden in fetching water. As for the various forms of social welfare assistance, whether in the form of pensions, unemployment insurance, maternity benefits, workmen's compensation, or otherwise, these tended to cover only the small proportion of persons employed in the major urban enterprises and government agencies and excluded rural and non-salaried persons.

54. Actions proposed by the Seminar to improve the situation involved a wide range of targets. Water supplies were a prime area of concern, drawing suggestions that village wells, reservoirs, and pipe-borne water systems be given priority in rural development investments. Another major area of need was the increase of basic health facilities. Access by all to basic health care was seen to be an essential component of development; extension of services to locations where these had not previously existed, much greater emphasis upon maternal and child health care, and a reorientation and decentralization of personnel and funds toward rural communities were stressed as aspects of this. It was agreed, in addition, that the preventative aspects of health care should be promoted, and that more health personnel should be trained to inform women about this and about nutrition and food preparation. Family planning (which will be discussed further in the section below on population) was considered as integral to the subject of health care, since spacing of children was important to the health of mothers and that of their present and future children. It was recommended that information on the desirability and the methods of family planning should be widely available.

55. Other actions proposed dealth with nutrition, family support services and social security. It was felt that nutrition could be improved by developing educational and demonstration programmes for youth and adults of both sexes, and by promoting improved means of production, distribution, and use of nutritious foods. In particular, research and education should be undertaken to make better use of readily available local foods, by assessing and providing information on their nutritional values, and by rehabilitating the traditional cuisine

with more nutritious components, emphasizing the use of these foods for babies, and their use in school lunch programmes. In addition, all education for nutrition should regularly emphasize the importance of breast-feeding during the first several months of the baby's life. The concern for services to the family reiterated the importance of child care, extending advice for means of better family living, relieving the work burdens of women, and promoting the use of intermediate technology at the household level. Suggestions for improved social security involved finding ways to expand the range of persons covered by existing programmes, especially among those in rural and small urban areas, in agricultural and trades employment, as well as those in other categories not presently reached.

5. Population

56. Population factors were crucial to the question of integrating women in development since the prevailing conditions related to fertility, mortality, and migration -- the three main factors -- were influential in delimiting the range of options available to women during their lifespan, including what the duration of that lifespan might be. It was noted that, in general, the first factor, fertility, tended to be consistently high throughout the Region except in those areas where the incidence of sterility had reduced the birth rate to an abnormally low level. Traditionally, cultural value had been placed upon the ability of women to bring forth many children, partly for familial reasons, partly to increase the number of workers and the sources of support for old age, partly to offset the decimation caused by high rates of infant and child mortality. (In the past, about half of all children born had died before the age of five years.) Interest in family planning or spacing of children was now increasing in some circles for reasons of health and family betterment. The second factor, mortality rates, tended to remain high, although the advances made in socio-economic development and in medical care had led to some reductions of them, especially in urban areas and in the more favoured regions of countries. An awareness was growing that frequent and closely spaced births were injurious to the health of mothers and that of children living or as yet unborn. Mothers and small children remained particularly vulnerable groups, which deserved greater attention in order to increase their rates of survival. Much mortality was still due to basic problems of ignorance and poverty, such as the impure water, poor sanitation, inadequate diet, lack of knowledge about the transmission and prevention of disease, lack of transport, and inadequate medical services. The third factor, migration patterns, could be characterized by an exodus of persons of working age from the rural areas, and an influx to rapidly growing urban centres. Continued production on family farms was made more difficult, while many urban immigrants had trouble finding jobs. Women were often left behind to continue rural life with their children; when female youth and adults came to town, they might not be prepared - or accepted - for employment, while adequate housing for a family was difficult to obtain.

57. Very broadly, the interest in population matters was to seek improvement to the quality of life in Africa, and increase the chances for women to participate in that improvement through spacing of children and maternal and child health care. Governments were seen to have a responsibility to assist in changing the population factors which acted to the detriment of women, and should provide support for family planning information and services to the extent that these were based upon concern for health, human rights and the felt needs of the public. National population policies which included efforts for reduction of mortality, investigation of subfertility among both males and females and better demographic studies were required. A component of such population policies would be family planning programmes designed to suit the country's needs and socio-economic conditions.

58. Raising the legal minimum marriage age was seen as a critical prerequisite for both population control and the improvement of the situation of women: it permitted an increased duration of schooling and the establishment of an independent life before the childbearing stage and, at the same time, mortality and morbidity related to childbirth by immature females could be reduced. Each country should review its laws, noting the current ages at which girls tended to marry, and the conditions of nutrition, education, and physical maturation experienced by females, in order to come to a decision on a minimum age which would be appropriate to the circumstances.

59. Making available the information and means which allowed couples to decide the number and spacing of their children, and to overcome problems of sterility, was widely approved. Family planning was considered a fundamental right of all, and more particularly of women, in order that women might protect their own health and that of their children and have only desired pregnancies, and in order to facilitate their gainful employment outside the home. The promotion of family welfare through government efforts should include attention to creating better conditions and services for the children who were born, to assistance in spacing of children, and to finding and treating the causes of male and female sterility. Official efforts in favour of spacing of children had the advantages of promoting reductions in the incidence of criminal abortion, infant mortality, and loss of life by mothers, which reductions might then free medical staff and hospital beds for better delivery care. Many laudable family planning programmes were already functioning, but it was recognized that their services might not yet involve a large segment of the public. Awareness of, and demand for, the services depended upon new attitudes and practices within families; such favourable circumstances were slow to develop on a mass scale, and required concomitant socio-economic advances which would arouse interest in family planning.

60. Efforts to promote the ideas of responsible parenthood were encouraged, and emphasis was made to involve both males and females in this objective. Since men had a dominant role in family decision-

making, they should not be left out of attempts to improve the family welfare. Schools should help to prepare young persons for the prospects of parenthood, and population education and sex education should be included in the curricula for both sexes at all levels, including colleges and non-formal education programmes, with the content of such teaching varying in accordance with the age and type of audience. In primary schools, biology and reproduction should be incorporated into such other subjects as nature study or science. In middle and secondary schools, emphasis upon population dynamics, family living, and the advantages of spacing of children should be taught, again through existing subjects. Teacher training colleges should include work related to the above-mentioned themes, so that new generations of teachers would feel secure in dealing with these matters. On a continuing basis, the staff of family planning programmes, social welfare caseworkers and extension agents, community development agents, and others, as appropriate, should all assist men and women in the aspects of responsible parenthood which related to their work.

61. Linkage of population policies with measures to improve the situation of women was emphasized as a means to help ensure a more balanced approach to demographic, economic and social development. Since the human resource was the most important natural resource of a country, the inability of women to participate fully in development constituted a tremendous waste of energies. Many ways to improve women's situation were discussed at the Seminar and are noted throughout this report. As part of these, it was felt that freeing women from the difficulties imposed by uninterrupted child-bearing had great value, for that promoted women's ability to determine the family size and the spacing between births which they and their husbands desired, and could manage, physically, emotionally, and economically. As planning became possible for the reproductive process, and as the burdens of non-desired child-bearing were decreased, women might find other options in addition to motherhood as identifications for social status. They might have more time and energy for non-familial activities, help make more flexible the standard concepts of appropriate female behaviour and become more fully integrated into the development process in their countries. Family planning was only one of the types of action which might be considered both among population policies and among measures for the advancement of women, but it could be an important one. Similarly, rural development efforts aimed at women might lead to creation of conditions favouring reduced mortality at the same time that women's livelihood was improved. Again, education for females might have the additional impact of delaying and decreasing child-bearing.

62. It was accepted that reproductive behaviour influenced the likelihood of achieving over-all national objectives. It was agreed, therefore, that Governments should give attention to such matters as family size, population growth rate, and demographic research, in order to determine the current mix of population factors having an impact upon national development, and to undertake humanitarian efforts which might help encourage

families to act in those ways leading to the greatest general benefit. Governments should strive to overcome ignorance of the relations between development aims and current or projected demographic patterns, and unawareness of the influence upon population factors which their policies might have. In concert with this, policies should be devised and implemented which combined respect for human rights with the re-shaping of demographic patterns.

63. Pregnancies during the adolescent years and beyond age 35 were recognized to involve much greater risks to the health and even the life of the mother and child than was the case during the intermediate years of reproductive capability. Awareness of this should be promoted so that women would come to be less frequently exposed to danger. In a related manner, education on maternal and child health generally and on the means for improving the conditions of life for infants and young children was seen to have great importance to the demographic side of development. Medical services should therefore promote more strongly the components for maternal and child health care, giving special attention to rural areas. These themes should also be included as topics within the ongoing activities of literacy campaigns, educational endeavours of the mass media, and the work of health teams which co-operated with the change agents of other ministerial programmes. The importance of breast-feeding to the nutrition of infants should be stressed and efforts could be focused upon the processing of local foods in a form suitable for toddlers.

64. A final proposal for action related to population was that services be increased to improve the conditions of elderly persons, especially those in rural areas. Many families raised more children than they would otherwise desire in the hope that the younger generation would provide for the needs of their parents when they reached old age. That system could cause great stress upon the parents during their productive years, and did not always assure them of attention later if, for instance, the children migrated. Increased government services might tend to relieve the fears which created a felt need for numerous offspring, while at the same time older persons might be assisted to live well and survive longer.

6. Research, data collection and analysis

65. The current extent of information on women was judged insufficient for a proper understanding of women's situation and the factors facilitating or limiting their opportunities for advancement. The poverty of countries in the Region had made difficult the conduct of studies and the assembling of data over a period of time on almost any subject. More particularly however, since investigation of women's participation in various sectors of life and previously received only limited attention, methods of indicating and explaining it were still crude. The kinds of information that could be useful were often imcomplete or totally lacking from such sources as population censuses, education statistics, labour

statistics, household income studies or reports on the delivery of health care. Lack of data and lack of progress of women had been mutually reinforcing problems. Where individuals and Governments had remained unaware of the nature of conditions faced by women, actions for the advancement of women had been less likely to take place. Similarly, where promotion of women's advancement had not been an issue, there had been little interest to conduct research. It was now coming to be recognized that the position of women in society, in the economy, and the polity, had importance to the well-being of the female half of the population, to the prospects for national development efforts and to the trends of various population factors. There was a growing need for new research and new indicators for examination of women's involvement in modernization.

66. Participants were especially interested to promote practical, action-oriented research to provide a sound basis for programmes, and to determine, for instance, the nature of the local culture and the causes of problems in the programme area, as well as to take note of the human and material resources available for their solution. Such research was necessary also for an understanding of a society and its culture in order to modify aspects which were barriers to change and to use the culture as a vehicle for new ideas. In order to integrate local perspectives into research, field studies should involve the people of the area in the investigations and in the decisions on the actions to be taken in the light of their findings. A common bond should be established between the respondent population and the agents working with them.

67. The current statistical concepts relative to economic activity was another theme of importance to participants. It was agreed that female participation in the modern sectors of employment was small, and that measurement of women's other activities could be difficult. Nevertheless, the data-gathering methods of national and international agencies would have to be revised to overcome the erroneous picture that many women did not engage in work or in earning a living. The statistics tended to report on "economically active" persons as those who received payment, and thus often under-represented or ignored those persons whose labour fell more or less within the subsistence sector. There was discussion of the definitions of "own-account workers", "unpaid family workers", "current economic activity" and "gainful employment", as used, for example, by ILO and it was agreed that ways should be found to include as contributions to productive output the largely unpaid agricultural work of women.

68. Many actions were proposed by the Seminar to improve the research situation. Foremost among these was the general recommendation to promote collection of data and development of simple indicators that would show the current and c' nging situation of women sector by sector. In order to make possible public awareness and to bring about changes,

information would have to become more readily available on a full range of topics, including, for example, accurate figures on the numerical distribution of women in a country, the age structure, the attendance by girls at all levels of schooling, the school drop-out rate by sex, the preparation of and participation by women in the various professional branches, the work and remuneration of female artisans etc. Ministries and other agencies should give greater attention to gathering and recording information pertaining to their activities; statistical offices and census organizations should gear themselves to ascertain more detailed and more development-oriented information on females; and all researchers should seek to devise and improve upon redily applicable measurements of the conditions of life for females.

69. Rural/urban residence should become a standard unit of division within the data collected. Currently the breakdown of information for many sectors was available only by capital city and the provinces, or by other major geographic divisions. Since conditions often varied considerably between the rural and urban settings, figures collected in a format which reflected that would be more representative and would help to sharpen awareness of the differences. In fact, in the examination of development trends, demographic trends, and the situation of women, the rural/urban differential might often be found as one of the more important variables.

70. Ways must be devised to identify and measure the women's portion of the total productive endeavour, whether at the remunerative or the subsistence level. As noted previously, the "Data base" paper used the concept unit of participation to help to analyse the role of women in employment, education and training, participation in administration and public life, access to health and maternity knowledge and services, food supply and nutrition, and reducing workloads and increasing productivity. That paper represented a significant advance, but it was agreed that it showed how much essential data was presently lacking, and how much more thought would have to be given to the methods of analysis. Moreover, there was need not only for closer examination of the extent to which women were engaged, for example, in food-producing activities as compared with men, but in a related manner, food production and all other topics of activity needed to be examined in terms of their importance in the time-budgets of women. That form of dual analysis would make it possible to see both the proportion of women engaged in specific activities, and the proportion of their time devoted to the achievement of these activities.

71. Other types of studies should also be conducted. Causes and effects of the prevailing images of women and their roles, including cultural roles, should be a prime topic. The prevailing views of the station of women, and the institutions which supported those views, strongly influenced the perspectives of the individual woman and those with whom she came in contact. Promoting an understanding of the implications

which such established images had, in comparison with newer ideas on the achievement of development, or on appropriate standards of human rights, might lay the groundwork for needed changes. Again, examination of the circumstances which gave rise to the prevailing images of women and provided a rationale for them might help show the extent to which the images had become outmoded. Investigation was needed also of the effects of polygamy upon women, including for example the economic and social threats posed by younger wives to older wives, or the competition which built up among wives concerning the number of children each bore. While there were criticisms of certain aspects of cultural traditions, some positive elements which deserved special attention were recognized. Despite the hardships and heavy burdens of life in the age-old subsistence setting, women could benefit from the extended family which supported the individual members and which provided persons to care for small children while the mothers worked. Women also had a recognized place within their family and community, where they had a valuable and stable role. With the advances of modernization, however, women might lose their former positions and might have difficulty in re-adjustic, especially if they were not employed in or otherwise had access to status within the modern sector. Research leading to action was therefore needed to try to adapt traditional benefits to modern settings.

72. Mechanisms were needed to maximize the potential of research as an agent of change. Currently many opportunities to gather useful data were overlooked and often research findings were not communicated to those who could apply them to the solution of problems. Data collection should therefore be encouraged as a regular part of all action programmes and arrangements should be made, with universities and other bodies, to conduct programme-related research or other investigations of economic, social and demographic factors pertaining to women. Concurrent with increasing the output of research, greater written and verbal exchange of information and experience through journals, seminars, and other methods should be stimulated to foster the growth of a community of interested persons. Attention should also be given to the communications media and to various change agents because of their role in disseminating the findings of research, and because they should themselves be subjects of research on ways to improve their functions.

7. Legislative and administrative measures

73. Definition of the status of women in the Region derived from an amalgam of international, state, religious and customary law, with provisions at the national level reflecting both the colonial heritage and the decisions of independent Governments. The Seminar limited its recommendations to the areas of national legislation and the application of international standards, but it saw the need to conciliate worthwhile cultural traditions with forward-looking new policies.

74. Full integration of women in development called for much improvement in the legal situation. Although women enjoyed some rights, freedoms, and other elements of equality with men, their condition was in many ways regarded as one of dependence upon men or respect for the primacy of men. Even where laws conferred benefits upon women, they might become inoperative through lack of implementation. In law or in practice, women often found it difficult to enter into contracts or into ownership of property on their own account, to marry be exercise of free choice, and in marriage to have equal status with the husband regarding possessions, children, and control of reproduction. The difficulties of women in keeping informed of their rights and responsibilities in having access to legal aid and securing the coverage and protection of international conventions were noted.

75. It was clear that promoting a greater consciousness of the legal aspects of life would be important to the potential for women's advancement since a prime mechanism to improve legal status was through influence upon the enactment and the administration of legal provisions. Relatively few women were currently active in public office, but many women did or could vote. Encouraging women to become more involved in political affairs could be one way both to make women sensitive to legal questions and to promote their participation, from the local to the international level, in the decisions affecting their lives.

76. Actions proposed by the Seminar centred upon assurance of certain elements of civil law in countries where those might not yet exist, and in examining the extent to which the laws were known and implemented. In the area of general legal capacity, equality with men was sought in the right to engage in contracts and lawsuits, to acquire and have authority over property, including that obtained during marriage, and to have freedom of movement. With regard to marriage, equality with men was sought in the right to selection of spouse and consent to the union, to protection during and at the termination of marriage - for example in regard to disposition of property - and to authority over and responsibilities towards the children of the union. In other areas, restrictions on the availability of information and services concerning contraception and family planning should be removed, thereby giving women greater control over their bodies. Legal aid should be made available in both urban and rural areas, and should include provision for cost-free services, thereby facilitating both the awareness of rights and the redress of grievances. Governments should be encouraged to ratify and enforce the various international instruments of benefit to women, such as the conventions of the International Labour Organization which pertained to conditions of female employment and maternity leave, and should give greater attention to ways of making concrete the ideals set forth in the United Nations Charter, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

8. Organizational machinery

77. In order to make possible more effective action by Governments, interest groups, and individuals for the fuller integration of women in development, it was recognized that the establishment of organizational machinery at the national and regional levels was necessary. That recognition had been building up during more than a decade, as indicated by resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council between 1963 and 1972[3], and recommendations of several conferences on African women betwen 1964 and 1971.[4] Also, a Women's Programme has been set up within the Human Resources Development Division of the Economic Commission for Africa. Detailed proposals drawn up at Rabat in 1971, were brought to the attention of the Seminar by ECA and participants contributed additional ideas and voiced approval for the machinery as part of the Plan of Action.

78. At the national level, establishment of four new organizations or units was recommended for those countries where they did not already exist. First, there would be a "National Commission on Women and Development", consisting of leading men and women who would make policy recommendations and action proposals. This body should be established on a long-term basis by the Legislature or the Executive of the country; it should include representatives from Government, industry, trade unions, educational institutions, women's organizations, and from other public and private groups; and it should be considered as an advisory body to the Government. The Commission would be responsible for the following: to examine and evaluate present levels of women's contributions to development; study those areas where women's participation should be strengthened; devise and promote programmes for action; help Government formulate international technical assistance requests; and work in partnership with all government authorities and in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations. The Commission should give special attention to the rural areas, where the majority of African women lived and worked.

79. Secondly, a "Women's Bureau" or "Permanent Secretariat of the National Commission" should be established to provide continuous technical expertise and background information, and to develop mechanisms for

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3/ Council resolutions 961 F(XXXVI), July 1963; 1068 D(XXXIX), July 1965; 1209 (XLII), May 1967; and 1682 (LII), June 1972.

4/ Seminar on the Status of Women in Family Law, Lomé, Togo, 1964; Seminar on the Civic and Political Education of Women, Accra, Ghana, 1968; ECA Regional Meeting on the Role of Women in National Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1969; Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women in African Countries, Rabat, Morocco, 1971; Seminar on the Participation of Women in Economic Life, Libreville, Gabon, 1971.

putting decisions into effect. The Bureau should be a permanent unit of government, with a civil service staff whose members would be drawn from a variety of disciplines. The Bureau should undertake research, devise projects, and promote the integration of women in various development sectors, giving particular attention to women's participation as an integral part of over-all development planning, to women's employment as part of over-all employment policies, and to improving education and vocational training for females in keeping with the needs of the labour force in rural and urban areas.

80. Two other units should also be created. An "interdepartmental body of experts" would concern itself with co-ordination of programmes and adequacy of representation within national policies and planning. The experts would include men and women from such fields as health, education, nutrition, agriculture, training, employment, social affairs, communication, population, law, trade and industry. The other unit, a "non-governmental organization (NGO) co-ordination committee", would assist the formation of interest groups for the better representation of women's views; help to mould public opinion; provide resources and facilities to supplement those publicly available; promote implementation of recommendations from national and international conferences pertaining to women; and facilitate international collaboration and exchanges of information.

81. At the regional level, where the Women's Programme of the ECA had already been active, establishment of two new organizations was recommended. The first, an "Africa Regional Standing Committee", would consist of representatives from Governments, intergovernmental bodies, and non-governmental organizations. The Committee's functions would be to co-ordinate the work of the National Commissions, to advise ECA on the strengthening of its programme for the advancement of women in the Region, and to co-operate with the various interested international and regional organizations -- especially the All-Africa Women's Conference.

82. The other body, a "Pan-African Research and Training Centre for Women", would, if the recommendation were adopted, begin functioning in 1975, with its base at the headquarters of ECA, and with mobile activities throughout the Region. This had already been envisioned as part of the implementation of the ECA Five-Year Programme on Pre-Vocational and Vocational Training of Girls and Women Towards Their Full Participation in Development (1971-1976). Staff members of the Centre would be representative of the Sub-regions of Africa, and of both English-speaking and French-speaking countries. The main subject areas of the Centre's concern would be food and nutrition, handicrafts and small-scale businesses or industries, family service management, up-grading of wage-employed women, and integration of women into planning at the national and project levels and the development of their skills for communication and organization. The Centre would extend its assistance to women's organizations, trade unions, and other local or national bodies, and could either work directly with those organizations or help them to submit requests to other international agencies. The Centre itself would hope to attract sponsorship and collaboration from a wide variety of technical assistance agencies within and outside Africa.

Activities of the Centre would take place within four programmes: First, itinerant national training by mobile teams with specialized skills, would provide training in the techniques of rural development, small industries, co-operatives, and communications. Secondly, research and collection of information, with the Centre both undertaking projects and serving as a clearing-house, would help to improve indicators on aspects of women's participation, harmonize data and make possible an exchange of innovative ideas. Thirdly, a revolving fund, would provide loans for women to support the initiation of co-operative and individual entrepreneurship among women. Lastly, an African Women's Development Task Force, with members recruited as needed for specialized service, would make available skilled women from one part of the Region to serve in another area upon request. By that means, women who had already attained levels of competence would be encouraged to volunteer assistance to those who were less advantaged. Consideration was given to the establishment of an African Women's Development Fund with contributions from the United Nations and its agencies, from bilateral aid programmes and voluntary contributions to support the Centre and the Task Force.

83. It was agreed that the machinery for the implementation of the Plan of Action should provide the means for publicizing it at both national and regional levels, through the mass media and through those individuals who could help to shape the opinions of the populace, in order to widen awareness of the importance of, and some of the means for, increasing the participation of women in development.

II. CONCLUSIONS

84. The Regional Seminar for Africa on the Integration of Women in Development, with Special Reference to Population Factors provided an opportunity for participants to express their growing consciousness of problems faced by women in the Africa Region, and to pool their ideas on ways to seek the advancement of women within the context of augmenting national development and of modifying population factors. Participants recognized that the countries of the Region faced many basic problems which affected development as a whole, and which consequently had serious impact upon the situation of women and the pace of their integration into development. Strategies dealing specifically with women could only be feasible when these were shaped in recognition of such general problems as mass poverty, food shortages, population problems, inadequate educational and training facilities, limited health services, inadequate planning capabilities, and weak international economic stature. A highly practical approach, in keeping with the contraints of the present situation, was therefore cautioned, and had been reflected in the present report. The discussions gave particular attention to elements of the conditions of life at the levels of subsistence and early modernization, the role of women in traditional society, and problems of development typical of rural areas. The

obstacles of illiteracy, lack of infrastructure, heavy work, and ingrained images were reviewed in terms of their retardation of development generally and of their hindrance to advancement by the female half of the population. Need was seen for step-by-step modernization of the rural environment, for more effective contributions by women to economic life, for more comprehensive community development efforts, and for more readily available means of spacing of children to protect maternal and child health and family economics.

85. At the same time, the participants recognized that the over-all way of viewing the position of women in society had a decisive effect upon the particular decisions which structured the possible activities of females. Transformation of the social situation would therefore have to accompany other aspects of the development of African countries and peoples, in order that the options for women might be regularly considered and augmented, towards the full development of human potentials, male and female, and within a concept of development which aimed at the betterment of the lives of all. The establishment of organizational machinery at the national and regional levels, such as the national commissions, the women's bureaux, and the Pan-African Women's Centre, could do much to promote and solidify the advancement of women in the substantive areas of development. Communication of ideas would also be a key element facilitating such advancement.

86. The meeting of women from all parts of the Region, was an important step towards obtaining the desired interchange of ideas towards improvement of conditions. The next task would be to extend the influence of this Seminar among the decision-makers and the populace in the various countries -- a task which would require a great enterprise and ingenuity, but which would also have great merit. Women in the ECA Region had a crucial role to play both in the development of their countries and in the solution of problems arising from current and future demographic trends. That situation must become more clearly recognized, and appropriate action must follow, in order to better achieve the goals of optimal development and the further enrichment of the culture and personality of all African peoples.

Litho in United Nations, New York

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REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR AFRICA ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO POPULATION FACTORS

PLAN OF ACTION

(organized by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa)

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
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UNITED NATIONS
New York, 1974

Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development

A. Introduction

Examination of the situation of women, their integration in development, and of population factors, has revealed these current realities: 1/

(1) Women are fully engaged in the economic and social tasks in the traditional sectors of African life, often to the point of exhaustion and ill health, yet little progress has been achieved in making their tasks less burdensome and more productive.

(2) The traditional role of African women in economic life is neither evident nor acknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government. 2/ Nor is their potential contribution to the modern sector included in development planning.

(3) Women's lag in opportunities has a serious effect on population factors, and both have detrimental effects on development. High rates of birth, coupled with high rates of maternal, infant and child mortality are the commonest pattern in Africa, although low fertility among women in some areas, resulting from women's poor situation and poor health, also occurs, causing anxiety in those families and countries affected.

At the Regional Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development, with Special Reference to Population Factors, Addis Ababa, June 1974, guidelines were drawn up by which national governments and local bodies, as well as international and regional organizations, might take actions to more fully integrate women into development and influence population factors. These guidelines constitute this Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development.

Participants at the Seminar recommended that each country should identify its own priorities within the Plan, as appropriate to the national development strategy. It was recognized and welcomed that the Plan of Action would in some areas reinforce current national development plans.

1/ The Data Base for Discussion of the Interrelations Between Women's Situation, Their Integration in Development, and Population Factors, UNECA, E/CN.14/SW/37, May 1974.

2/ Report of the Regional Conference on Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women in African Countries, para 22, Rabat, Morocco, 20--29 May 1971.

The Plan should be implemented within ten years, with a mid-term review of progress. It will commence in 1975, International Women's Year, and have its mid-term review in the final year of the Second United Nations Development Decade, 1980.

Since many of the changes are achievable only on a long-term basis the guidelines include both short-run and long-run strategies. Because the vast majority of African people still live in rural areas, where poverty is often acute, actions related to rural life are given greater attention than those directed to urban areas.

The situation of women varies across the continent. Thus implementation of the Plan, and the urgency of particular actions within it, may also be expected to vary from country to country.

The participants in the Seminar laid special emphasis on the importance of ensuring the availability of resources, both human and financial, for the implementation of the Plan. With regard to financial reources it was stressed that:

-- All available sources of support should be explored, including community resources and those of the various private funding agencies;

-- Programmes for implementing the proposals should be given priority in national development plans, and this could improve their chances of attracting international and bilateral assistance;

-- Special efforts should be made to inform both the donors and recipients of such assistance regarding the importance of the integration of women in the process of development.

B. Organizational Machinery

Efforts to widen opportunities for women to participate in development will require action by the society at large through its goverrmental machinery, non-goverrmental organizations, and other groups and individuals, all of which may be supported by international and regional organizations. Appropriate machinery and administrative procedures are essential.

Plan of Action

1. On the National Level : Where such machinery does not already exist at the national policy and planning level, the following should be established:

-- National Commissions on Women and Development, consisting of leading men and women who would make policy recommendations and action proposals; 1/

1/ Recommended at Rabat Regional Conference, 1971.

-- Women's Bureaux or Permanent Secretariats of National Commissions, to undertake research, to formulate projects and programmes, and in general to seek women's integration in all sectors of economic and social development; 1/

-- An interdepartmental body of experts, consisting of men and women from various fields (such as health, education, nutrition, agriculture, training, employment, social affairs, communications and information, population, law, trade, industry), to ensure co-ordination of programmes and adequate representation within national policies and planning;

-- A non-governmental organization (NGO) co-ordination committee, which might assist in organizing women to seek representation in decision-making bodies, to work to wards changing attitudes, to supplement public resources and facilities, and to promote international collaboration and exchange of information and experience. The NGO's should also take action to implement recommendations of national, regional and international conferences relevant to women's roles.

2. On the Regional Level : The Economic Commission for Africa is unique among the regional economic commissions in that it has already established a long-term Programme for the integration of women in development. The role of the ECA in stimulating national implementation of the Plan of Action was explored and the establishment of the following additional machinery was proposed:

-- Africa Regional Standing Committee, 2/ to co-ordinate the work of the National Commissions, to advise the ECA Women's Programme, and to co-operate with international and regional organizations, especially the all Africa Women's Conference.

-- Pan-African Research and Training Centre for Women, 3/ to assist Governments and voluntary agencies, including women's organizations, in strengthening the roles of women in the Africa Region. The functions of the Centre would include:

1/ Ibid

2/ Recommended at Rabat Regional Conference, 1971.

3/ Recommended by the All Africa Women's Conference, the Addis Ababa Regional Meeting, 1969 and the Rabat Regional Conference 1971.

a. Itinerant national training in rural development techniques, small industries, co-operatives, and communications;

b. Research and collection of information, with special attention to harmonization of data, to development of indicators of women's participation, and to diffusion of information;

c. A revolving fund, to support co-operative and/or individual entrepreneurship among women;

d. An African Women's Development Task Force, which would allow skilled women from one part of the Region to serve in another area when so requested.

The programme of the Centre should stress subjects such as those related to lightening women's work, to improving administrative procedures for women's organizations, co-operatives, or trade unions, to generating income-producing activities, to family life, education, and to establishing national machinery to augment women's work for development. Moreover, it would assist national organizations in their submission of applications for foreign assistance. It should also act as a clearinghouse for the exchange of innovative ideas among the countries of the Region. The subregions of Africa should be represented on the staff of the Centre, and particular attention should be given to top-level representation from French-speaking countries.

3. By the Mass Media: Special measures should ensure that wide publicity is given to the Plan of Action through all means of communication -- mass media, radio, press, television, and cinema. Efforts would also be made to enlist the energies of those change agents and opinion leaders who communicate the ideas of development at the local group and interpersonal levels.

C. Education and Training

The failure of girls and women to be educated and trained equally with men leads to the marginal participation of women in development efforts and in modern economic activities. The results are limited roles for women and inadequate training for the employment opportunities that may be available. A definite correlation has been found to exist between education for females and smaller family size, but the effect of education on fertility is often lost when the education does not result in rewarding employment. Co-ordination of education, training, and employment strategies is therefore desirable for both developmental and demographic reasons.

It was deemed necessary to ensure equal access by girls and boys to education at all levels and to encourage parents to permit girls to continue their education beyond the primary level. Special efforts should be devoted to reducing the school drop-out rate among girls. There should be an integrated approach to education and training, emphasizing needed community skills.

Plan of Action

1. Provide short-term compensatory programmes for women and girls - in literacy, numbers and non-formal education programmes;

2. Introduce training programmes for women at the village level in modern farming principles and use of equipment, agriculture and fishing, co-operatives, entrepreneurship, commerce, and marketing (for example credit, book-keeping, and consumer education);

3. Reform school curricula and ensure equal curricula choices for girls and boys, including agriculture and other employment-oriented subjects;

4. Revise educational material to fit national needs and facilitate changes in attitudes, and include courses on population education and family life education in school curricula at all levels as well as in programmes of non-formal education;

5. Provide social and vocational guidance for girls as well as boys, encouraging girls to equip themselves for a wide choice of employment opportunities.

D. Employment

To be integrated into the development effort means to have legal right, as well as access, to the available means for self-improvement and societal improvement. Important in this respect are opportunities for both wage-employment and the generation of income through self-employment or family-employment. Unless there is greater participation by women in all areas of employment, the objectives of development itself will be hindered. Moreover, increased gainful employment and opportunities for self-employment can be expected to contribute to changes in fertility levels. Government departments and other appropriate bodies should establish positive policies and targets for the employment of women in both the public and private sectors. Special emphasis should be given to the employment of women at the policy and planning levels, including service on international bodies and representation on delegations to foreign countries, and service in the secretariats of the United Nations and in other organizations within the UN system, including the specialized agencies.

Plan of Action

1. Promote employment policies and strategies to incorporate specifically provisions for wage and salaried employment, co-operative, and self-employment for women;

2. Provide public services and facilities, including those for child care, in order to support women in their multiple roles of employee, homemaker, and mother;

3. Integrate manpower and education policies;

4. Apply principles of equal access to all economic activities, including equal pay, availability of credit, technical services, and training;

5. Promote opportunities for employment of women in decision-making and policy positions;

6. Develop programmes for integrated rural development to increase gainful employment opportunities for both men and women, and improve rural infrastructure (roads, water supplies, electricity, village-based services);

7. Recognize the major role of rural women in the agricultural and marketing sectors, and provide training, equipment, village technology, public transportation, water and other facilities to increase their productivity and to improve their lives and the lives of their families and societies.

E. Communications/Mass Media

Because the mass media may influence thinking and shape opinions, they can play an important role in the formation of new attitudes concerning the roles of men and women in society. The mass media may promote the integration of women in development by helping to remove prejudices by publishing the need for, and capability of, women to contribute their talents as full partners with men.

Plan of Action

1. Support of governmental and non-governmental organizations for research on the mass media to determine the image of men and women they portray, their influence in changing attitudes on traditional roles of women, and their capacities to stimulate those legislative and cultural changes resulting in greater equality of men and women.

2. Vigilance by governmental and non-governmental organizations over communications material to ensure that information is provided to men and women on the current situation of women and how such a situation can be improved, on the changing roles of men and women in contemporary society, and on employment and training programmes for the advancement of women.

3. Efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to achieve a greater share for women of the decision-making positions within mass-media employment.

F. Health, Nutrition and Social Services

Improved access to health, nutrition and other social services is essential to the full participation of women in development activities, and to a general improvement in the quality of life. To be fully effective, these services should be integrated into overall development programmes, with priority given to rural areas. While the primary objective of such services is social and economic development, they also have a significant impact on fertility and on population growth.

Plan of Action

1. Provide easily accessible water supplies (including wells, dams, catchments, piping, etc.), for safe potable water to improve health conditions and to reduce the burden (which falls mainly on women and children) of carrying water;

2. Strengthen basic health services, using trained medical and para-medical workers to the fullest extent; including in such services the provision of contraceptives with adequate follow-up for protection of the health of the users;

3. Develop nutrition programmes for boys and girls, women and men, including nutrition education in all schools, and improve local food production, processing, preparation, storage and conservation;

4. Provide supportive services for the family, including unified health care delivery systems, child care, assistance to the mother, and advice on growing and use of local foods;

5. Expand the coverage of programmes for old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, and social welfare assistance, in order to help guarantee a minimum level of social and economic security for all persons.

G. Population

Social, economic, and demographic factors are closely inter-related, and change in one or more invariably involves all. Alterations to the pattern in which women have been denied full participation in the development process involves, among other things, changes in certain crucial demographic variables such as age at marriage, age at birth of first child, spacing of children, and total number of children. A decisive factor in such changes is enabling women to determine, in relation to work and family values, when and how often to bear children.

Plan of Action

1. Raise the minimum age of marriage where appropriate;

2. Make available to individuals and couples, through an institutionalized system such as a national family planning programme, the information and means to enable them to determine fully the number and spacing of their children, and to overcome sterility;

3. Involve men as well as women in the effort to ensure responsible parenthood;

4. Ensure balanced demographic, economic, and social development by closely relating population policies and programmes with measures to improve the situation of women;

5. Utilize all humanitarian means (including adequate social security for the aged) to encourage the family size that is appropriate to national objectives;

6. Promote awareness of the deleterious effect on the health of the mother, and the decreased chance of survival of the child, caused by pregnancies during early adolescence and beyond the age of 35 years;

7. Provide education on maternal and child health, and on the means for improving the conditions of infants and young children;

8. Provide services to improve the conditions of elderly persons, particularly in the rural areas.

H. Research, Data Collection and Analysis

Despite a relative abundance of some varieties of demographic, economic, and social data, the indicators which would explain the situation of women are not readily available. These indicators can be developed, however, once the need for them is understood. It is difficult, but not impossible, to measure the extent of women's present involvement in economic activities, and the positive and negative impacts of modernization and development efforts on their work-loads and their lives. Moreover, the various factors which may facilitate or constrain the provision of wider opportunities for women and the establishment of population policies are not adequately studied. Such data are needed as bases for action programmes, for the evaluation of interrelationships, and for assessing the effectiveness of programmes.

Plan of Action

1. Promote collection of relevant material and develop simple indicators on the quality of life; and on changing conditions of women, including those pertaining to education, employment, food and nutrition, access to health services, and availability and disposition of income;

2. Include, in censuses and surveys, data according to urban and rural residence within that collected for sex, age, marital status, family composition, education and skill levels, and participation in both modern and traditional economic activities;

3. Measure the extent of women's activities as regards food production (cash-crop and susbsistence), water and fuel supply, marketing, transportation, and participation in local and national planning and policy-making;

4. Study the causes and effects of the prevailing images of women and their roles, including cultural roles;

5. Study the division of labour and the time-budgets for women as compared with those of men, with regard to both economic and household activities;

6. Encourage data collection as a part of all programmes and encourage universities and other bodies to conduct research on family and household situations including the extent of female-headed households, and on the economic, social and demographic benefits of women's wider participation;

7. Establish mechanisms for exchange of information and experience;

8. Conduct research to support the planned use of communications media and of change agents within activities for the integration of women in development and for the modification of demographic patterns.

9. Carry out studies on the effects of polygamy upon women, for example on the threat posed by younger wives to continuation of economic and social security for older wives.

I. Legislative and Administrative Measures

Legislative and administrative measures can be instruments for accomplishing the full integration of women in development. The passage of laws, the enactment of administrative measures, and the enforcement of these can open up equal opportunities and equal responsibilities for women in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of their countries. Through them, Governments can guide and institutionalize

changes in attitudes towards the role of women and can enable women to achieve the equality with men which is envisioned in the UN Charter, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, in various international labour standards, and in other international instruments.

Where such legislation does not exist, women's organizations should support its introduction, and where the legislation does exist, they should investigate the extent of its implementation. Public information campaigns should also ensure that women as well as men have a full understanding of their legal and civil rights, and that they are aware of measures they can take to enforce these rights.

Plan of Action

1. Accord women equal rights with men in the field of civil law and in particular:

   (a) The right to equality in legal capacity including the right to contract, sue and be sued;

   (b) The right to acquire, administer, enjoy, dispose of and inherit property, including property acquired during marriage;

   (c) The same rights as men with regard to the law on the movement of persons;

2. Accord women equal status with men in marriage and in particular:

   (a) The same right as men to free choice of a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

   (b) The same rights as men during marriage and at its dissolution, particularly in respect to property rights;

   (c) The same rights as men with respect to parental rights and duties;

3. Remove legal and other restrictions on the dissemination of information concerning family planning and on the sale and distribution of contraceptive devices;

4. Provide legal aid, where possible free of charge, in both rural and urban areas;

5. Promote the ratification by national governments of the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, especially where these concern the provision of benefits to women.

J. Summary

Women in the ECA Region have a crucial role to play both in the development of their countries and in the solution of problems arising from current and future demographic trends. In recognition of this, the recommendations of the Seminar aim at drawing greater attention to the needs and the possibilities for action related to promotion of greater integration of women in development. The guidelines include both short-run and long-term strategies for change, and they give special attention to basic improvements at the local level. Although specifics on the condition of women and on the current activities of governments vary throughout the Region, broad agreement has been possible on several general areas deserving priority attention. It is therefore hoped that improving conditions for women, and expanding their opportunities in such fields as education and training, employment, health, and public life, will be seen not only as a matter of social justice, but also as a significant means of achieving developmental and desired population goals, and further enrichment of the culture and personality of all African peoples.

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